

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (*currently amended*) An auditory navigational system comprising:
at least one transmitting handheld device with at least one button, where the handheld device is one of either a cellular telephone or a handheld computer with a wireless data network capability;
at least one computer that receives signals from the at least one handheld device; and
at least one audio beacon controlled by one of the computers where the at least one beacon emits a sound as a result of a user actuating the user interface of a button on the handheld device, such emitting audio beacon being selected by the user as a result of their interaction with the receiving computer using the handheld device.
2. (*previously presented*) The system of Claim 1 where the emitted sound is stored in the emitting audio beacon.
3. (*cancelled*)
4. (*previously presented*) The system of Claim 1 where such emitting audio beacon is a beacon at one location among a sequence of locations determined by one of the at least one computers to be a route to the selected beacon.
5. (*previously presented*) The system of Claim 1 where the audible volume of the emitted sound is adjustable so that it is adjusted upward when the ambient noise surrounding the emitting beacon increases from a nominal level or adjusted downward when the ambient noise decreases from the nominal level.
6. (*previously presented*) The system of Claim 1 where the emitting audio beacon does not emit a sound at the request of a second user when it is in the process of emitting a sound at the request of a first user.

7. (*previously presented*) The system of Claim 1 where the emitting audio beacon emits a sound requested by a second user after a sound requested by a first user is completed when the request by the second user is received while the sound of the first user is being emitted.

8. (*currently amended*) The system of Claim 4 ~~The system of Claim 1~~ where the at least one computers causes at least two audio beacons to emit a sound in sequence and stores in computer memory an index representing the identity of the audio beacon that emitted a sound immediately prior to the user actuating the handheld device and before the next beacon in the sequence has emitted the sound.

9. (*previously presented*) The system of Claim 1 further comprising at least one radio frequency identification device with a data network connection with the at least one of the computers.

10. (*currently amended*) The system of Claim 1 further comprising:
an electromagnetic detector that detects the user's presence in proximity to the detector; and a data network that connects the detector to at least one of the computers.

11. (*currently amended*) The system of Claim 1 where the at least one audio beacon further comprises a DTMF activated relay.

12. (*cancelled*)

13. (*previously presented*) The system of Claim 1 where the at least one audio beacon further comprises a digital data memory device where at least one sound is stored as digital data.

14. (*previously presented*) The system of Claim 1 further comprising a data output connected to the at least one audio beacon that causes a device connected to such output to perform a function referenced by commands encoded as data output by the beacon.

15. (*currently amended*) The system of Claim 1 where ~~instead of actuation by pressing a button, the handheld device~~ actuation of the handheld device is accomplished by spoken voice into a microphone.

16. (*currently amended*) The system of Claim 1 whereby the emitting audio beacon is selected by the user ~~where the sound is emitted~~ when the user voices a command into a microphone.

17. (*currently amended*) The system of Claim 15 or 16 ~~The system of Claim 1~~—where one of the at least one computer or the handheld device further comprises a voice recognition system.

18. (*previously presented*) The system of Claim 1 where the handheld device further comprises a text to speech capability.

19. (*cancelled*)

20. (*currently amended*) A method of providing an auditory navigational guide to a person comprising the steps of:

receiving from a user's handheld device an indication of a selected destination from among a plurality of selectable destinations;

The method of Claim 19 where the emitting step further comprises:

determining the approximate location of the user;

determining the next audio beacon among a sequence of audio beacons corresponding to a route to the selected destination from the approximate location;

receiving a request to produce a cue sound;
emitting [[a]] the cue sound from the next audio beacon.

21. (*currently amended*) The method of Claim [[19 or]] 20 where the handheld device outputs a verbal description of at least one aspect regarding the route to the emitting beacon. [[or selected destination]].

22. (*currently amended*) The system of Claim 4 ~~The system of Claim 1~~ further comprising a data memory located in one of the computers wherein the substantially shortest usable route between one pair of the at least one audio beacons is stored in the form of a sequence of indices corresponding to the sequence of audio beacons that lie closest to the substantially shortest usable route between the pair of audio beacons.

23. (*previously presented*) The system of Claim 1 where the at least one computer is located in a central location and controls the audio beacons in one or more remote locations.

24. (*currently amended*) The system of Claim 1, 4, 10, 16 or 18 where the emitting audio beacon is located in close proximity to the pedestrian entrance to a train, a bus, an escalator, an elevator, a hallway, a stairwell, a pedestrian line defined by a crowd control device, the curbside of a roadway crosswalk, the entryway to a library stack.

25. (*currently amended*) The system of Claim 4 ~~The system of Claim 1~~ where the approximate locations of the audio beacons are stored in a data memory accessed by the at least one computer.

26. (*currently amended*) A method of providing an auditory navigational guide to a person comprising the steps of:

receiving from a user's handheld device comprised of either a cellular telephone or a handheld computer with a wireless data network capability, an indication of a selected destination from among a plurality of selectable destinations;

receiving a request to produce a cue sound;

emitting the cue sound from an audio beacon located in proximity to the selected destination where the receiving from a user's handheld device step [[determining step]] comprises the operation of an interactive menu where choices are presented as audio output from the handheld device and selections by the user are made by pressing a key pad on the handheld device.

27. (*previously presented*) The method of Claim 26 where the choices include selection by the user of at least one of an airplane flight, bus line, bus line destination, train line, train line destination, office location, exhibit location, floor level, stairwell, elevator, crowd line, ticket line.

28. (*currently amended*) A method of providing an auditory navigational guide to a person comprising the steps of:

receiving from a user's handheld device an indication of a selected destination from among a plurality of selectable destinations;

receiving a request to produce a cue sound;

emitting the cue sound from an audio beacon located in proximity to the selected destination where the receiving from a user's handheld device step [[determining step]] comprises the operation of an interactive menu where choices are presented as audio output through the handheld device and selections by the user are made by speaking verbal commands into a microphone operatively integrated with the handheld device.

29. (*currently amended*) The method of Claim 28 where the choices include selection by the user of at least one of [[an]] an airplane flight, bus line, bus line destination, train line, train

line destination, office location, exhibit location, floor level, stairwell, elevator, crowd line, ticket line.

30. (*cancelled*)

31. (*new claim*) The method of Claim 20 further comprising:

outputting a verbal description from the handheld device of at least one aspect regarding the selected destination.

32. (*new claim*) The method of Claim 1 where the emitted sound is specific to the user.